

DAYS WITH A GUNNER

AND

FIELD NOTES ON SHOOTING

BY

DENIS E. B. DALY



PRICE FIFTY CENTS



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Review of Mr. Denis E. B. Daly's Book

REMINISCENCES OF HUNTING

Taken from Winnipeg Tribune, July 5, 1933

Few things in human experience make a greater appeal than the primeval instinct of hunting. An observing friend remarked the other day that he had seen the inside of a summer cottage turned upside down in a hunt for a lost five-cent collar button, not any more for its utility value than a stirring of the natural desire to participate in a hunt for something.

So, when Mr. Average Reader comes across a 16-page pamphlet from the pen of Denis E. B. Daly, of Winnipeg (from the Stoyel presses), telling of game-hunting experiences in Manitoba the chances are curiosity will not be satisfied until the very last word is read, constituting a half hour of real enjoyment and thrills.

Mr. Daly writes as a sportsman, from his youth up to his still active years in the sixties. He calls himself "an old man now," adding: "I am just as keen as ever to get out for a few days' chicken and duck hunting. My dreams in old Ireland of Hudson Bay, Ungava and Fort Garry, all in the great lone land, have all come true, for if there is any truth in the saying that we were on this earth in some shape or form hundreds of years ago, I feel quite satisfied that I must have been a walrus or polar bear, for even after forty-seven years in Manitoba any picture or story of the frozen north makes my blood boil with joy."

Mr. Daly is refreshingly frank in expressing his views on game protection, etc.: "Blue geese are now protected in the Spring. For the life of me I can't see why, for they don't come back in the open fall season on their course, but about 1,000 miles to the east of us, close to the Atlantic Coast, so it means that they are breeding here and we are protecting them all summer for our neighbors in the southern states to shoot in thousands. Game protection is all very well, but this is rotten legislation. Duck shooting is a different matter, for we have them with us until freezeup."

Tremendously interesting are the stories vividly told of duck and prairie chicken shooting. Practically every duck species in the world are represented here—canass backs, red heads, widgeon, pintails, mallards, wood ducks, teals, black mallards (a very fine duck), scoters, merganders, bald pates, blue bills, golden eyes, etc., and owing to abundance of the best of feed, nearly all edible.

"The finest duck, in my opinion, is a barley-fed mallard, and as there are thousands of acres of barley stubble the feed is more than plentiful, and a good fat mallard will weigh $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. No other duck will feed on stubble except occasionally a pintail. I have seen a thousand or more

mallards feeding on a small barley stubble, and, Oh Boy! if you can get into a hide before they start coming it is only a question of how many cartridges you have."

Among the big game, Mr. Daly ridicules the idea of wounded moose attacking hunters. "It is all bull. As long as a moose has breath in his body he will run. For eating purposes the cow moose is far the best. After a bull gets to be four years old I think the meat is worthless. Heads are of no value any more. Why bar cow moose shooting? There are ten cows to one bull, and I think there is hardly a real good head left in the Riding Mountains."

Here are a few caustic words penned by the frank-speaking sportsman: "The trouble with the Game Laws in this country is that they are framed by men who sit at their desks in their office from one year's end to another, and having lived in a city all their lives are not competent to frame Game Laws. A natural-born sport who has lived among the birds, beasts and flowers all his life is the one best able to judge, not a politician. All that is necessary as far as I can see, to be an expert authority on Game Laws, is to be a good shot at clay pigeons."

Mr. Daly has shown fine capacity for condensation in his live-wire pamphlet. It will delight the hearts of sportsmen, and the tinge of adventure is appealing to everybody.—M. J. J.

DAYS WITH A GUNNER

— AND —

FIELD NOTES ON SHOOTING

In 1727 Markland writes of partridges in *Pteryphlegia*, or the art of shooting flying:

*"When in a cloud the scattering birds arise
And various marks distract the choosing eyes
That choice 'Confine to One Particular'
Most who confide in fooling fortune, err
Young greedy Novices, who often hope
By random fate to pick a number up
Amaz'd behold none bounding on the ground
Whilst many a bird drags off her mortal wound
Experienced sportsman will of 'One' make sure.
Rest honestly content of 'One' secure."*

CHAPTER I

I AM ASKED by numerous readers of my little book "Shooting Reminiscences" to give a few suggestions as to how to approach game under different conditions; and I will endeavor to give you the benefit of my fifty-four years experience in the field and covert. I would like to say, that I feel I have still a lot to learn, and as my shooting days are nearly over, it is not likely that I will ever have much more to tell you; but such as it is, I am glad to help fellow hunters, and more especially the ones, who, owing to business, only get an occasional day off, who naturally cannot be expected to compete with the more fortunate ones who can afford the time and money to spend all Fall in the wide-open spaces.

How often you find a man who has shot up to the limit and more, all his life, who has not gotten so old that he is useless in the field, state that all game birds and deer must be protected, and he will go the limit to induce the Game Authorities to curtail our sport.

I have run across many of these cranks. One man went so far as to say "Why try and enlighten the public as to the ways and means of hunting game?" My answer to this was: "I have had a happy sporting life and I am only too glad to see the other fellow get his share." I got my shooting experiences from the best masters in the world—gamekeepers in the Old Country, and one of the greatest hunters in Canada, in the person of Mr. James Simpson, of Rapid City, an ex-gamekeeper, a magnificent shot, and a close observer of wild life. It was my pleasure to be with Jim for nearly thirty-five years, and I can thank him for teaching

me all I know in "Hunting Game." All my shooting has been done in the Rapid City and Minnedosa district, and in the years gone by it has been a sportsman's paradise and will be again when the pot holes fill up. You will not get any boat shooting there, but you will get something better, and a good deal better for you too, and that is walking around all day with a gun on your shoulder getting the occasional shot, besides the pot hole shooting now and then, you run into a stubble shoot, and if the chickens are in season you can revel in a mixed shoot, and now that we have the Hungarian partridge, every minute of the day will be very pleasantly occupied.

CHAPTER II

You can still get a magnificent mallard shoot at either Sandy Lake on the C.N.R., or Jackfish Lake in the Rolling River Reserve, south of Wasagaming. The highway is good and it certainly is a beautiful drive.

Wasagaming as it is now called, is very different to what it used to be in the years gone by. For twenty-five years I camped under the trees at the east end on my way to my camp after moose and elk. Now the trees are all cut down and this particular campsite is now a golf course. It is something like the geese in the Spring, I never went to see the lake again. It would make me weep.

A word about rifles. There are so many splendid weapons made it is hard to discriminate. I have shot with nearly every rifle made, and I found the Savage .303 the hardest hitting rifle I ever had. On two occasions I killed a moose dead-as-a-door-nail with this gun, one single shot for each. Some people say they are liable to freeze up in the bush, but they will not if you keep the locks and firing-pin free from oil. If they do, it is entirely your own fault.

The Winchester Carbine 30-30 is also a mighty good weapon, very handy in the bush, and will kill a deer at any distance.

Here is a rifle you do not see very often in this country. It is the double-barrel Express made in any bore from 256 to 600. The latter size for elephant shooting. It is used a lot in Africa and India, and if people only knew what a beautiful weapon it is, it would be more used here. Built exactly the same as the double-barrel shot gun; and for a running shot in heavy bush, there is nothing better.

The Lee-Enfield .303 Sporting, 10 shots, is excellent and light. I ~~once~~ killed an elk running at 900 yards across a lake; but it was a fluke, as there were three running in line. But it is a mighty accurate rifle and very easy to keep clean on account of the bolt action.

In cleaning a rifle never use a steel rod as it is liable to wear the rifling and the slightest kink in the barrel will throw it out of plumb. Also never force a rag down the barrel as so many do, it will cause bulge that can never be rectified. Even in a shot gun a tight rag has been known to ruin the choking when forced out. Three things should have the best of care—a gun—a rifle—and a watch.

CHAPTER III

How many of us have felt the thrill of the day before shooting? Oh boy! but it is great. All the worries of the year are forgotten. First thing in the morning you get your old duds together. Have a last look at your gun—place carefully in the gun-case along with plenty of oil, old rags and a cleaner. By this time it is time to go to the office for a hard morning's work. You are no sooner settled down than it strikes you that perhaps you have not got enough shells. So you tell your stenographer that you will be back in fifteen minutes. At the store you meet with several other shooters, and by the time you get back you have been away an hour. But who cares? You can't go shooting every day. You get nicely settled down and a call comes in from a friend wanting to know what district you are going to hunt in. You answer that you are pretty busy but you will drop over for a few minutes. By the time you get through, it is time to go home to lunch. And this is one of the days you will go home in the middle of the day. Once more you give your outfit the once-over and prepare for a hard afternoon's work at the office, telling your wife that you will be terribly busy and not to expect you home until at least 7 p.m. At three o'clock a client comes in to discuss a very important deal, and after listening to him patiently for about five minutes you happen to mention that you hope it will be a fine day tomorrow as it is the opening day for chicken shooting. Then you open up on him first about the new gun you have purchased—latest model 25 inch-barrel-fully choked—and guaranteed to kill at sixty yards; then you go on to tell him the wonderful shoot you had in the same district last year. By this time it is nearly 4 o'clock and you tell him you are really too busy to go into the matter fully, but to come in again next week. Your stenographer reminds you that there are several very important letters that should go out before you leave. Just as you start to dictate, your shooting companion calls you up to know if you are all ready for the road and to be sure to set your alarm clock for 5 a.m. This is enough to unsettle anybody. So you decide to call it a day at 4 p.m., grab your hat and coat and away with you towards home. Now your worries are over and you decide to call at that place on Fort Street for a 40-ounce bottle of Daylight Robbery just in case you need a little refreshment through the long arduous day ahead of you. Oh, boy! but you are feeling pleased with the world, and you carry your stuff with great care in case of a slip. While waiting for your supplies you chat pleasantly to anyone close to you. One man you know slightly in the ordinary course of conversation you would call him "a horse's neck" you now address him as "Old chap." As you go out of the door you are asked to buy a paper, and although your pockets are full of them you slip the newsboy ten cents. You are next accosted by a brother who needs a cup of coffee; as a rule you ignore them, but this one looks to you as if he really was in need in spite of his red nose and rotten breath, and you slip him a quarter. You are just making Broadway when a beautiful lady who notices the bulge in your pocket—wishes you a pleasant "Good evening!" You reply gallantly: "Good night and goodie for you." This is enough to make any lady stop; but much to her disgust you hurry on, and if you don't—you should do.

At last you reach home and greet your little wife with "Hello mother, what have you got for a hungry man?" Oh, boy! but you are happy, and why should you not be for you are going shooting tomorrow.

You place your bottle carefully in your shooting bag, remarking that you are not going to open it until 10 a.m., next day. Just before you sit down to supper it strikes you all of a sudden that perhaps the stuff you bought might be a little too strong; so you decide to have a mouthful—not more than three ounces anyway. It tastes not too bad and not too strong, so you cork her up and put away in your bag again. After supper you lay your old duds out—wind the clock, and set the alarm for 5 a.m., but you will never need it, never saw a shooter fail to wake up at least an hour before the set time. Like the old Irish woman, she was not a bit superstitious, but it is better to be on the safe side. You intend to turn in very early so as you will get a good sleep, but try and get it. You are slipping into your pyjamas and it suddenly occurs to you that perhaps that bottle was a little too strong and it would be better for a little water; so you pour a little out—not quite three ounces this time—and fill the bottle up with water. This is just right, and you hit the hay wishing it was morning. You are not in bed very long when you begin to worry about your outfit, wondering if you have packed everything, and hoping that your friend does not sleep in. All of a sudden it strikes you that your dealer gave you No. 10 shells instead of the 12's. This happened to me once, and I did not make the discovery until I was about six miles out in the country, with a horse and buckboard. You toss around and kick the daylights out of the covers, and at last in desperation you have another little snort to put you asleep. All is quiet for at least ten minutes, but you feel that you must say a word or two more, so you wake your wife to know what she is going to give you for breakfast and be sure and wake you in case the alarm fails to function. At last you fall asleep, but about 2 a.m. you wake with a jump, light a match to see the clock, and congratulate yourself you have three good hours yet to snooze. About 4 a.m. you wake again and as it is so near 5 o'clock you decide to get up and make a cup of tea. You turn off the alarm so as not to wake your wife who is more awake than you are—thanks to your high jinks through the night. Now the real worry comes, perhaps your friend overslept himself, or the car has broken down, and a hundred and one impossibilities, which can only be settled by his driving up in the car. At last you are away, headed for your favorite stamping ground. Your companion remarks casually that his bottle is not quite full as he had a very bad pain in the night, and if it had not been for a few snorts he might not have been able to make the grade. You retort that he ought to have had better control of himself and people were very foolish to over-indulge the night before going shooting, adding that you yourself had a snort or two only because the doctor said you must never be without it, and be sure to take at least two drinks every night before turning in. However, we are away. The sun is shining brightly, all cares forgotten, a congenial companion, a little joy water, good health and the wide-open spaces ahead of you, and in the words of Kipling: "I sez to my fluttering heart strings, I sez 'Peace be still.'" Boys, I am getting old and cannot indulge my fancies like I used to, but I am getting just as big a thrill out of the

outdoor life today as I did forty years ago. The late Mr. Stevenson, aged one hundred and four when he died, father of our well-known financial broker, S. S. Stevenson, was a good shot when he was eighty years of age.

CHAPTER IV

So there is a chance for us all yet. To young and old—shoot a crow whenever you get a chance, for every crow shot means at least twenty more game birds, and until the crow is exterminated the game birds will be much lessened. Far too little attention is paid to these pests by the Game Authorities. Every school teacher in the province should be supplied with a circular letter setting forth the absolute necessity of destroying the crow, to be read in the schools, and make the bounty big enough to cover at least the cost of the shells. Spring is the time to get after them. You will find them not very far from the country slaughter houses at this time of year, and when they start to nest a good hunter should account for over one hundred per day—in birds and eggs. Of course, this class of hunting does not apply to the city man. But it certainly should prove a big success at all country points. Now, Mr. Game Legislator, concentrate a little more on destruction of vermin and less on unreasonable restrictions and we will have more birds. Let your motto be "War on the crow." The bounty on wolves worked to perfection, and I consider them far less destructive than the crow. Over-production will lessen most animals and feathered game; but it does not seem to affect the crow. So we will have to do our share.—

In our little town there was a local character who was always in "hot water" over some little petty offence, such as infringement of a by-law, etc. I happened to be Police Magistrate and our friend was brought before me about three times a week. I usually let him off on payment on the costs. Eventually he moved to a larger town. One day I drove down to this town and met my friend in the bar. "Hello Dinny! Come and have a drink," and added: "What are you doing for spending money since I left." Some years ago a friend of mine was in charge of an elevator in Minnedosa; when the day's work was done he and a couple of friends would stop at his house, and his usual expression was: "Come in boys and have a snort." He was laid up with a cold, and his companions called to see how he was; they were met at the door by his little daughter who said her father was in bed, but to come right in and have some snorts.

CHAPTER V

While writing this I was very interested to hear that the ptarmigan are making their way south to Manitoba, and it may be in the near future we may have thousands of them as they are very hardy and prolific breeders and the country east of Winnipeg should be just the place for them—rock and scrub. There is no reason why they should not be plentiful here. In parts of Scotland, especially in the hilly country, they abound. There used to be lots of them in Ireland fifty years ago, but they tell me that they are practically extinct there now. They are excellent eating, and owing to their color make a very sporting shot in the winter. It is a wonder to me that they have not been seen before, for being so close to Hudson Bay, they must be here in small bunches. My advice to some of the Game Legislators is to go and look for them. It will not do them any harm to get out in the wide-open spaces, and perhaps they will learn something; as I said before, you cannot begin to frame Game Laws unless you have had the actual experience in the field, and this means a life-long study of the habits of fur and feather.

Perhaps some of my readers would be interested to know where they can get books on shooting. Write for a catalogue of sporting books to "Wm. Potter, 30 Exchange Street East, Liverpool, England." He carries some of the finest books in the world on shooting, both old and new, and I would advise all members, or would-be-members, of the Game Commission to get from him "The Badminton Library on Shooting," composed of two volumes—"Moor and Marsh" and "Field and Covert," and to the ones who cannot afford the time to travel, they will find that they will learn a lot from these books. To those fond of fishing "The Badminton Library" book on "Fishing" will sure give you a thrill; beautifully illustrated, and priced at only seven shillings and sixpence, postage ninepence. Badminton is the seat of the Duke of Beaufort, a great sportsman in his day, and joint editor with Lord Walsingham and Sir Ralph Payne Galway of "Badminton on Shooting."

CHAPTER VI

I am quite sure we have more natural born sports in Western Canada than any country in the world, and all they need is a little more groundwork in the ethics of shooting, and I would strongly recommend to all to procure and read every sporting magazine it is possible to obtain.

I never fished in my life, that is in a scientific way, and it was only the other day I was talking to an expert fly fisherman. He made the remark that for a greenhorn, I seemed to know a lot about fishing; my reply was, "I will always read a fish story or anything else pertaining to sport."

Everyone who has a Saturday afternoon off and a car should get out in the country and help to protect our game birds by destroying the greatest pests and game exterminators in Canada—the crow.

An elephant never forgets; and to show the wonderful sagacity of these animals, the following may be of interest. Some years ago a big game hunter came across a very sick elephant in the African jungle. He decided to take it alive and tame it, and in the course of time he succeeded. The beast was so grateful it would follow him around like a dog. The hunter returned to America, and about ten years after he happened to be at a circus and here was his old friend—the elephant. The beast recognized him immediately, and to show his gratitude picked the hunter out of a fifty-cent seat and put him gently in a dollar one.

A lion hunter was coming back to camp one evening and a huge lion sprang at him, but in the lion's eagerness he sprang right over him. The hunter escaped, and next morning went out with his rifle to get Mr. Lion. He came across him at the same place, and there was the lion practising "low jumps."

CHAPTER VII

I have just had a chat to that grand old sportsman—Mr. J. J. Moncrieff, who recently took a trip up to Nelson to report on the trout. If you want to get a real thrill as to outdoor life, just listen to him, for I think he is the greatest authority in Western Canada on hunting. I learned something from him today I never knew before; that is: the country north of The Pas is teeming with prairie chicken and partridge, right in the heavy timber. In the old days the chicken never left the prairie, and can anyone explain this? Mr. Moncrieff informs me that he is going up north again after the trout, and we are looking forward to his next account of his trip.

How often you see the ad: "Give your boy a .22 and make him happy." This is the way I interpret this ad: "Give your boy a razor and tell him to cut his throat." Might as well make an end of it quickly for the .22 except in the hands of a mature person is a highly dangerous weapon, and the .22 has been known to kill a man at four hundred yards. Eighty per cent of the gun accidents are caused by this weapon, and in nearly all cases handled by boys. There should be a law that no person under the age of eighteen years should be in possession or shoot with a .22 rifle. If you want to give your boy something in the nature of a rifle give him a good air gun, accurate but not too high powered. These are powerful enough to kill partridge, rabbits, gophers, pigeons, etc., but not powerful enough to penetrate the body through clothing. An eye shot is the only danger and it is not often an eye shot, generally the stomach, which in nine cases out of ten is fatal.

Fathers, next time you see your young son pointing a toy pistol or even a stick at his chum, reprimand him sharply, for this is the groundwork for all young men learning to shoot. When you are breaking in a young dog and you want a good one, you sure will correct his faults, and when he is old enough to reason for himself he never will forget the lessons you taught him.

For a man, young or old, the .410 shot gun is a beautiful weapon, and will kill any feathered game up to thirty-five yards or more. They are now making the 3-inch shell for this gun, and no one could want for a better weapon for early in the season shooting, and the barrel is long enough to prevent any boy swinging it around haphazardly. If he does he should not be allowed a gun at all.

For the person of mature age there is nothing to beat the double 12 cylinder or choke. Some say, nothing like the 20-16 or pump. But I notice in the course of time they all end up with the 12. Pump gun for field shooting should not be allowed. In the marsh in a canoe or boat I would say let her go—with fingers cold and numb you don't want to be shoving shells in every minute, and why I say let her go, you are not going to do much harm in ducks coming in ones and twos; but on the other hand it is very tempting to keep banging away at a flock of chickens as long as you have a shell in the gun, which means you probably get one or two at the most and wound a half dozen. According to the gun experts 30-inch barrels are obsolete. The 25 inch will shoot just as well and far as the 30, and the penetration is just as good. Get a case to take this gun full length and you have a handy little weapon. No more pulling your gun to pieces every time you want to shoot.

CHAPTER VIII

I am a great booster of the shell with a standard load. They are powerful enough to kill anything. The so-called long range shells are dangerous—hard on your gun—and hard on you and will not kill any better than the standard. Lots of young shooters think when they feel their shoulders pounded to pieces that the gun is shooting hard, but more force is kicking back than what is going out of the muzzle. The equivalent to three drams of black powder in smokeless is plenty with an ounce and eight of No. 4 or 5 is an ideal load. I favour No. 4 shot for the reason in the early season you do not mess up your birds too much and in the late season you either kill or miss your birds, whereas with smaller shot you are very apt in the late season to see your birds getting away with their legs hanging down, and a bird will fly a long way in this state. In handling a gun be ever careful—always treat a gun as if it were loaded—whether you be in or out doors—and learn to handle it with skill and confidence and unswerving caution. Coolness and complete self-possession out shooting is the strongest recommendation of a shooter.

A sportsman should always fire the instant the game rises as long as it is clear of fellow men and dogs and if at a fair range, and on no account to follow the mark with his gun in the hopes of getting a better shot. Endeavor to drop your game the moment the gun comes to the shoulder, provided the game is not too close. This applies to Hungarian partridges more than any other feathered game—a jealous shot is no companion for you.

How often you hear a jealous shot say when he has deliberately fired at the bird you have just dropped: "Did you fire?" When you quietly

answer "Yes!" he says, "Well, I would hate to eat that bird—he will be so full of lead," knowing perfectly well that he fired too late. Some years ago I had as my guest up at Rapid City a very prominent Winnipeg man, and having been a great snipe shooter he was a beautiful shot, but oh! so greedily. Nearly all day long I let him have everything—much to his delight. But there is a limit to everything. I made up my mind that the Captain needed a lesson—old man as he was. We were passing a small bit of scrub and two chicken got up practically under his feet. Before he had his gun up I downed them both. You ought to have seen the look of astonishment on his face. He got as red as fire and nearly choked; but when he recovered he said: "Daly, you have given me the greatest lesson I ever had in my life, and I should have known better." The trouble with him was that he had been in the army in India and was used to kicking the natives around and found it very hard to be hail-fellow-well-met with "the natives of Canada" as he called them. However, until the day of his death he was a very warm friend of mine. And as the old timers used to say: "The only man whom he would let smoke in his office was 'Denis Daly of Rapid City'."

When you are firing at a covey *always* select your bird and on no account to shoot where they are thick and endeavoring to think of killing two birds out of the flock *without* wounding the others. It is hard to try to pin a shooter down to this, but you will be surprised how easy it will become in a very short while. Two guns walking up a covey, the man on the right takes the birds on the extreme right, and the one on the left, the extreme left. You will find you will get more birds this way and wound less.

CHAPTER IX

Aiming comes under two separate heads: one consists in killing the bird, and the other in killing it well. Shoot with both eyes open. Everything moving can be seen on both sides, and you will be surprised how it will improve your shooting. When you are shooting at rabbits running away from you *don't* shoot at the rabbit. Shoot *between* his ears and you will never miss, provided he is within range. Same applies to a rising bird—shoot over his head. In a cross-shot, people ask "How many feet do you lead them?"—this is a question that has never been answered, not even by the best authorities in the world. This is all imaginary. A bird flying across you at say forty yards you do not know whether you are leading him at six feet or six yards.

Clay pigeon shooting may help a very young shooter. If only to teach him to handle his gun in perfect safety. But I still maintain that it is very poor practice for field shooting.

The best device I ever saw was a machine called "Mechanical Snipe," and it is a great wonder to me that it has never been introduced in Canada, or the States. At least I have never heard of it, or seen it in this country.

In the year 1891 I was home on a visit in Ireland at Balls Bridge, on the outskirts of Dublin. There was a huge Masonic Tercentenary.

Every line of sport was represented, including clay pigeon shooting and mechanical snipe. The trap for the mechanical snipe was as follows: Two upright iron bars, and strung between them was a heavy rubber band six feet long and about one inch thick, practically on the same principal as a catapult, only six feet wide. The snipe was very like an aeroplane about the size of a blackbird, made of steel, with a hook in front to catch the rubber. It was dusted with a blue powder and pulled back just like a catapult with a pair of pincers and let go off. Of all the contortions I ever saw in my life, that snipe had any live snipe beat a mile, with the twists and turns; and when it was hit the blue powder would come off in a cloud, just like a shell bursting in the air. You paid so much for ten shots. I did not even have my own gun. But you could hire them on the ground. I took ten shells, and as I was doing a lot of snipe shooting I managed to kill nine. This was too much for a looker-on, and he turned around and called out: "I will bet anyone a pound to a shilling he can't do that again." My shooting companion was the Hon. Pat Browne, a brother of Lord Kilmaine, and quick as lightning he said: "I will take you." There was a booth just behind the shooting field, where you could get something stronger than Coco Cola, and I fortified myself with a *double Irish* and started to shoot. To my own astonishment I killed the whole ten. This was when I was twenty-one years of age. It is a lonesome feeling to know that as you grow older, your shooting qualities lessen every year, and any man sixty or over who says "he is as good as he was"—if I were not a perfect lady, I would call him a "damned liar" and then some. Sometime now when I make a few good shots, I get up in the air and imagine I am younger than I thought I was.

CHAPTER X

We are terribly handicapped in this country not being able to get a perfect-fitting gun. Most of us when we want a gun, go to the nearest dealer and buy what they *think* will suit. And it may be, and very often is, just the opposite to what they should really have. But there is no remedy for this here, and a good many of us are fortunate to have a gun at all. In the old country if you can afford to pay for a really good weapon, the experts are there to take your measurements. Take you out to the shooting school—which all high-class gunmakers have. There instructors will tell at a glance just the way you put up the gun what is going to suit you. There is weight to be considered; balance; length of stock; bend, and more than anything else *your eyesight*. You might *think* the gun fitted you perfectly—but what you *might* really need is a *cross-eyed* stock or learn to shoot from the *left* shoulder. This would all be corrected by instructors. But, alas! it would cost money, and very few of us are in a position to pay a hundred guineas or so. However, like the Duchess who had lost all her money and her Bishop was sympathizing with her said, "Never mind Bish, we will *beggar* along the best we can." We have here in Winnipeg the T. Eaton Company, and for service there is nothing to touch them in the whole Dominion, and in their Sporting Goods

department, of which I am more familiar, I can see that they are thoroughly up-to-date. Why would they not be with such a live-wire as their Mr. McCance. But what they lack, and ought to have, is a shooting school on their recreation grounds. A practical gunsmith and instructor combined. One who has learned his trade under some of the best gunmakers in England.

CHAPTER XI

In looking over my shooting diary in the year, or rather fall of 1892, I shot 182 head of game consisting of ducks, chicken, grouse, partridge, rabbits, etc., and used 453 shells. In 1893, 194 head—cartridges used 540; in 1894, geese included, 280 head—cartridges used 702; in 1895, 129 head—cartridges used 390; in 1896, 143 head—cartridges used 292 . . . and so on. An average of three shells to a bird, in the whole season, is considered good, taking everything as it comes, all sporting shots. It is a very common fault in shooters not to *mark* a wounded bird. If you wound a bird *never* take your eyes off him until you walk right up to where he fell. I find the best way is to get a tree or bush in line from where you are standing. If you are working a dog, when you get to the place, stand perfectly still, let the dog do the rest. Nothing annoys a dog more, than to have you tramping around and destroying the scent. I had a retriever bitch once, and give her her own time and leave her alone, and she would find anything; but if you started to hunt yourself, good-bye to your bird, for nothing would induce her to get on the scent again.

My advice to you to save time and trouble is to avoid "long shots," which may be likely to wound. I am often asked about what distance the average bird is shot. I have no hesitation in saying from twenty-five to thirty-five yards—seldom more. But with a very good shot a bird rising at forty yards is seldom missed. Now in regard to clothes, a good shooting coat is very necessary. And the shooting coats we buy here are the best in the world. Plus four pants are the best, for the reason if you get wet as they are baggy at the knees they will not make you uncomfortable. Nothing is so annoying as wet pants pressing tightly on the knees. For field shooting a good heavy boot with nails in them. I used to wear cricket spikes about one-half inch long, and you would be surprised how much further you can walk with the spikes. Heavy all-wool socks. If you ever get your feet wet and you have a long drive home and you have any whiskey left put about a spoonful in each boot, and you will never get cold. I have not tried it very often myself—for just about this time there is no whiskey left. Wet feet as long as you are walking will never hurt you. I noticed in "Believe It Or Not" column, a woman aged seventy-two years had never had a drink of water. I have not drunk much water myself in fifty years. A young grandson of mine, aged thirteen years, had a red nose the other day, caused by indigestion. He was very concerned about it and said, "Granddaddy, what gives people a red nose?" I explained to him that some people who drink whiskey got red noses. And he said, "Granddaddy, your nose is not red."

CHAPTER XII

Hungarian partridge, the latest importation, is in my opinion the gamest little bird we have in the province. Magnificent shooting and good eating. The expression in the Old Country—"A partridge breast and a woodcock's thigh are food fit for a king." But it must, like all game birds be properly cooked. They are rather hard on a dog, as they run so far and fast unless you surprise them suddenly, which is not very often. You will find them usually along the hedgerows close to the road, especially if there is stubble on the other side. They do not like the larger bluffs, and will not go near them if they can help it. When you see a covey running along the road in front of you slow down and let them run until they are tired. They will soon run into the hedge or ditch. This is the time to get out. Send one gun on the opposite side of the hedge and about one hundred yards beyond where you saw them go in; you yourself walk slowly to where you *think* they are; but at the same time don't forget to have eyes in the back of your head for they are just as likely to get up *behind* you; and when they do, this is the time to take—as they say in Ireland "a dangerous tight hold of yourself and hold your fluttering heart-strings," for they are up with a whoop and a screech and liable to give you nervous prostration. This is the real reason nine out of ten find them hard to shoot. And until you learn to control yourself you never will have much success. Never fire where you think they are thick. They never are thick. A covey of partridge spreads further apart than any other game birds. A party said to me the other day: "I made quite certain of getting a bird for when flying away there were two birds close together and I fired between them, but I did not touch a feather." Here is the mistake. Probably they were much farther apart than he thought. And if he had held on one bird, he might have got him. It will never get you anywhere in shooting into a flock of partridges. You can do this with a certain amount of success where the ducks are coming in big bunches, but it is a very bad fault to do it at all. If you are walking on the right, take the two, for a double on the extreme right, and your companion the extreme left bird. If you are by yourself, take the leading bird. This should give you plenty of time for your second barrel, and you will be surprised how quickly you will develop into a real good shot. You will find the birds in the early morning on the stubble or clover field, and if you are not shooting over a dog, have a pair of field glasses with you as they are nearly impossible to see with the naked eye, and when you do locate them, here is the proper procedure. Walk—*not* towards them, but in a semi-circle gradually closing in, but never looking in their direction. They have their eye on you, but they think you have not seen them and will lie close. Let your companion do the same on the left side. And first thing you know you have them between you. Now the rest is up to you. Do *not* walk straight up to them, if you do they will be away to "Hell" and gone before you can get within one hundred yards of them. Like the story of the Irish Tommy at the War. He came in one evening with twelve German prisoners. The Commanding Officer says: "For the love of Mike, Pat, how did you get them?" He says, "Ah, begorra, Sir, I surrounded them."

In the middle of the day you will find the birds in the clover field, if any, or meadow bottoms, but mostly in the hedgerows along the roads, as they like to scratch in the gravel. But you will never get a real good shoot unless you have a good close-working setter or pointer, but owing to the opening date so late no one wants to keep a bird dog for perhaps a couple of days shooting, if the weather is fine. These large coveys should be broken up, for as sure as you are alive, they will exterminate themselves by inbreeding.

Here is the solution of a good partridge shoot without dogs, if you are well enough off to afford it—get a piece of land where the birds are plentiful, sow about forty acres in turnips and a few acres in clover. The turnips will pay for themselves as feed for cattle, sheep, etc. I venture to say that you will have no cause to complain of anything in the shooting line—for partridges like turnips and clover better than anything—and will nearly always lie close. Get about six guns in line, no dogs required, except a well-broken spaniel to retrieve wounded birds.

Thirty minutes in a good hot oven is plenty for these birds; baste continually and serve with bread crumbs, bread sauce, currant jelly, and a bottle or two of Burgundy; followed by a few snorts of hot punch, and if this does not satisfy you, you are very hard to please.

CHAPTER XIII

The habits of prairie chicken are so well known that it is hard to tell you anything; but I will endeavor to tell you how these birds can be bagged, no matter how wild they are. There are four things essential to a good chicken shoot—a congenial companion, a warm sunny still day, a good working setter or pointer, and a bottle of "Joy Water."

In the days when the season opened on the 15th of September it was a pure delight to get out in the early morning amongst the stooks, your dog hanging ahead of you, and the birds lying well. This is as it should be, but the authorities see fit to spoil sport as much as they can, making the season as late as they do; as much as to say, we will bet you you can't shoot twenty birds, and at the same time charge you \$2.00 for a license. If you are going to limit the bag why not let a shooter have his birds in the proper season? What difference does it make whether a man gets his birds September 15th or October 15th? It is all rot anyway, for as far as I can learn, a shooter will get his birds any time he sees fit, so long as he knows the birds are fit to shoot, and no law in the land will stop him. It is exactly like the days of Prohibition, when you take away a man's privileges you only turn him into a law breaker, and try and stop him!

When you put up a covey they usually make for the nearest bluff, light on the edge but immediately make for the far side. If you are shooting by yourself you will be out of luck, except for a stray bird. If with a companion, either you or he should get well around to the far side, and when you get to the far side, call out "Are you there?" or "Where are you?" This will confuse the birds, for naturally they think the danger is coming

from the near side; they will rise, and half of them will break back, which means that you both are going to get some shooting. I never saw it fail yet.

Later on in the season when the birds are wild and you see a covey feeding on the stubble, don't attempt to stalk them, just sit down, light your pipe, and have a mouthful—if you have any. In the course of time they will leave the feeding ground and make for some quiet corner; even then wait, say, for half an hour, by that time they will be heavy from food and sleepy, and will probably let you get close enough for a shot. There is always a way to get birds even if they are very wild.

Sometimes when you are driving along the road you will put up a covey; they will make for a distant bluff; don't dare go near the bluff, they are watching you and will rise one hundred yards from you. First of all you or your companion circle around, even if you have to go a quarter of a mile, then signal to your friend by raising your hand, to close in—not a whisper out of you; one of you is going to get some shooting, it does not matter which, but it is usual to send the best shot. What does it matter who shoots? You should take as much pleasure in seeing your friend down a couple as if you had got them yourself. Unselfishness in shooting, as in other things, is the joy of life.

CHAPTER XIV

Some years ago a friend and I ended up a stubble shoot. It was dark as pitch and a rough night. We started for our stopping place, pleased as punch and loaded down with ducks. As I knew the country well I angled across the fields, and unfortunately the fields were nearly all cross-fenced with barb wire. It was not long before my friend started to groan and stumble and imagine we were lost. When a man gets afraid out in the woods it does not take long to make him give in, and although I had the big end of the ducks to carry I relieved him of most of his and it was not very long until I had to carry his gun. In the course of time we struck the main trail, and he called out: "For God's sake where the hell are we now?" I pointed to a light amongst the trees—"There is our stopping place." The thanks I got was: "You can go to hell now I know where I am."

In the days of the horse and buggy, two well-known citizens of Winnipeg—one a lawyer and the other a financial agent—now residing at the Coast were chicken shooting west of the city. Neither of them knew much about a horse, but they knew enough at lunch time to take the bit out of the horse's mouth, but when they were ready to move on, neither of them knew how to get the bit back in the horse's mouth. After trying for nearly a quarter of an hour, one exclaimed: "What are we going to do?" and the other retorted: "Let us sit down and wait until the son of a — yawns."

Pack a good lunch, and eat when you are hungry even if it is only ten o'clock in the morning; nothing will put you off shooting more quickly than worrying about lunch. I used to have a man shooting with me who

wanted to sit down and fry bacon every half hour; but I would rather have this man, than a man in charge of the lunch basket who did not want to eat until nearly one. Why? Your day is nearly done then. A very tasty lunch for two is as follows: A cold duck or prairie chicken, green tomato pickles, thick bread and butter, jam sandwiches, a little drop of something hard, and a quart of good ale. My old shooting friend was called Jim, and after a lunch like this, I said to him: "Have some Jim jam," instead of "jam Jim."

Where to find chicken on a wet cold day-beats me. I have had some of the best working setters in the country, who would never miss a bird, but on a day such as this they could not find them. I remember one year we hunted everywhere without finding a bird, and I said to my friend: "Let's try the hay sloughs," most unlikely place imaginable, but this is where the birds were; every slough bottom had a few birds in it and we ended up the afternoon with a fairly respectable bag. I have never seen the chicken in the hay bottoms since. Chicken like to nest near water, and in a dry country you will always find birds near a small wet puddle, even if it is miles away from their feeding ground.

Here is another way you will always get a shot, no matter how wild the birds are when you see them out in the open or in the trees. Drive slowly up to them and be ready to jump out the far side, then sneak from behind the car and you have them.

The pinnated grouse are a hard bird to hunt. After the first day they get wild as a hare, run like the dickens and get up out of range. If you ever see a grouse among a covey of chickens it is not likely you are going to get a shot. They will stampede anything, and I do not like them very much as a table bird. I do not think there is any special way of hunting them. If you see them among the covey try and pick them off first; then perhaps you will get some shooting.

CHAPTER XV

Wild duck shooting is divided into two classes—marsh and field; the former I do not know anything about for I have never shot a duck out of a canoe or boat, but from what I am told there are too many ducks lost in marsh shooting, and very few, if any, in field shooting provided you have a good dog. Of course a dog is impossible in the marsh.

All my duck shooting consisted of pot hole shooting and stubble, and to anyone who has enjoyed the pleasure of a real good stubble shoot, will never forget it. I have hidden in stooks and the ducks coming so fast you scarcely had time to breathe. Very few cripples. There is more satisfaction over one duck killed dead and picked up on dry land than over fifty scattered all around you in the water and very little chance of retrieving one-half of them. For a successful duck shoot on land and water a windy day is essential. Ducks are tamer, lie better and cannot fly high. In the pot holes you will see them cuddling under the wind, and

if there is any shelter at all you will get a shot at them provided you are prepared to sneak—even if you have to crawl on your belly for a quarter of a mile or so. I used to have an English retriever bitch who had the art of crawling down to a science. She would get flat on her tummy and utilize every blade of grass for cover; but at the same time she had one eye open as to what was going on; even after you shot there would not be a move out of her until satisfied that all the shooting was over. Her swimming powers were sublime, and she could tire a wounded duck out in a couple of minutes. I shot hundreds of birds over her and hardly ever lost one.

No. 4 shot is, in my opinion, the best for wild fowl. Either early or late, more straight kills and less wounding, and if you are firing a few hundred shells in a day you will find that the 4's are far easier on you than smaller shot, for the reason that the smaller shot has far more recoil.

I used to find that in pot hole and stubble shooting a good pair of field glasses were a great help in locating the position of the birds and the easiest way of getting at them. With two shooting it is sufficient for one gun to do the stalking and the other to locate himself upwind, for every species of birds will get up against the wind. You will have noticed this even with an aeroplane, and they will fly for a long time against the wind before turning. Don't forget with a rising bird, to shoot well over his head, with a high cross shot or over your head. Put your gun up, but before pulling the trigger pull your gun forward what seems to you six yards or so. But as I explained to you before, no man knows whether he is shooting six yards ahead or six feet, but shoot *ahead*. Some shooters get so expert that they will invariably get the bird in the head or neck which stops all argument and saves a lot of time retrieving. Hunters never mind getting wet; it won't hurt you—provided you are not sitting in the car all day long. When you get home change your wet things right away and "Tap the Admiral." In the days of sailing vessels and embalming had not reached its present stage of perfection, a British Admiral died in India. He wanted to be buried in England. So they dumped his body into a huge rum cask, filled it full of rum and sealed it. On the voyage the Captain noticed that nearly all the sailors were "Tight as ticks" all day long, and knowing that they had no access to the canteen had a watch put on them. One of the sailors was noticed sneaking up to the cask occupied by the Admiral, boring a hole with a gimlet and having a good swig through a straw. Hence the expression "Tapping the Admiral." Owing to the drastic measures taken in draining the low lands duck shooting, as far as Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg, will soon be a thing of the past. If a stop is not put to it we will have millions of acres of uplands in the province; and for God's sake leave us the little water we have in the Winnipeg district. General Sir Francis Butler in his book, "The Great Lone Land," states that Lake Winnipeg was twelve times bigger in the old days than it is now. You can still see the beach frontage at the Arden Ridge near Minnedosa, and why destroy the most valuable asset we have in the province. In an old atlas I have, Lake Manitoba is shown as Little Lake Winnipeg, and they are practically joined. There is no possible way of finding out how old this atlas is—even Nelson is not shown.

CHAPTER XVI

I never posed as a dog trainer, but I was fortunate enough to have some of the best working setters and retrievers in Western Canada. My wife taking them in hand as pups, and I would finish them off in the field. Pups and children are very much alike: both need to be taught obedience. If you tell a dog to do a certain thing, see that he obeys you, and you will have no trouble in his field training. I usually worked two dogs at the same time, a retriever and a setter; the retriever to work the bluffs and the setter to find the birds. If you ever start sending a setter into the bluffs to put up birds you will ruin him. My dogs worked in perfect harmony, and as they were brought up together were very seldom jealous, except when the day was done and preparing for a long drive home they would both make a dive under the rig and jockey for the coveted place next to the pony's heels. After a hard day I always looked my dogs over, bathed their feet if they were sore and combed the burrs out of their coats, fed them well, turned them out for an hour and then made up their beds under the kitchen table. This is the time they would do a little jockeying again to get the biggest share of the bed. Talking about pose, reminds me of a story—"Two English girls went over to France for their holiday. They were told that Paris was a very wicked place, so were on the *qui vive* for any possible rough stuff. They thought it would be a good thing to have their photos taken, so went into a photographer's. They explained the best they could what they wanted. The artist was very helpful, and suggested that they have the photos *en pose*. They flounced out of the studio stating they did not come there to be insulted."

CHAPTER XVII

Snipe shooting, owing to the immense amount of draining done, is a thing of the past, at least, as far as the Winnipeg district is concerned, but surely there must be some places where there are still some snipe-shooting places that are marsh lands. In the old days you could shoot hundreds of them within twelve miles of the city, that is, at Rosser and east of Stonewall. In fact the shooting was so good that when the King (then Prince of Wales) was out here his party had two days at the snipe, and bagged over 1,300 birds. How many could you shoot today over the same ground? None, I venture. Snipe shooting is a gamble, there is no regular rule to go by. One shooter remarked to me that snipe shooting was just like trap shooting. Is it, indeed? Try snipe shooting three days running. You may hit them in fine style one day, and the next miss four out of five. In trap shooting you will probably shoot as well the third day as you did the first. Very little is known about these beautiful game birds. Not long ago an old duck hunter said to me: "I would not be bothered in shooting the snipe. They are in large flocks along the river flats, and if you fire into them you would kill a dozen." Now I will tell you that you *never* see a snipe—until he rises. My friend mistook "The Waders" and "Yellow and Red Shanks" for snipe. When a man becomes



a good snipe shooter he has reached the pinnacle of shooting, for they sure are a hard bird to bring to bag. Let me tell you there is only one snipe in Western Canada, that is the common English snipe, weighing about five ounces. The Jack snipe so common in the Old Country weighs two ounces. To shoot them you want No. 8 shot and nerves like iron; only constant practice at the birds will get you anywhere, and I am afraid we will get very few opportunities to get the regular practice needed. The reason a snipe twists is to conquer the wind; afterwards he will go steadily away. Some shooters wait for this change, but they are mighty cool shots, in fact, so cool there is no fun in it. Nothing like a little excitement in all kinds of shooting, and if you cannot enthuse you might as well stay at home. Two Englishmen were out touring Canada. They visited Niagara and the Whirlpool. One of the grandest sights in the world. Neither of them said a word. Eventually they landed up in Jasper Park. This was too much for one of them, and he said very quietly: "Not bad, old chap." The other retorted: "Quite so, but you need not be so demonstrative." I could tell you another story about the whirlpool, but my publishers would refuse to print it; but any time I meet you personally I would be glad to discuss the matter with you.

I have been asked how to make bread sauce. Here you are: Put about a pint of milk in a double boiler, get a large onion, stick cloves all over it, put it in the milk, simmer until the juice of the onion is thoroughly mixed with the milk, then pour the mixture over some crumbled bread. You will find it a wonderful addition to your roast game.

CHAPTER XVIII

When all other shooting is over, why not have a go at the Jack rabbit. The habits of the Jack are exactly similar to the jumping deer and tracking the Jack you will learn a whole lot about deer tracking. Just like the deer they feed all night, lie down at dawn and do not start to move until about 3 p.m. If you don't get them before then, the chances are you won't get any, for after that hour, they get as wild as blazes. In order to track them in snowy weather you want a fresh wind in the early morning, or fresh snow. Start off along some side trail close to an elevator, if possible, as you will find their tracks about there; walk quietly along the road until you come to a fresh track, and be sure you are following it in the right direction. I remember when I first started to track them I nearly always went the wrong way. Remember the long pads of the hind legs come first, and the small round holes made by the fore paws behind. Now you are away keep your eyes open to every bit of scrub or rough fall plowing. This is where they will be—*never* in the heavy bluffs. You will probably see them stretched out in their form. You will see their eyes before anything. They are up with a jump, but don't be in a hurry, for most likely you will be very close to them. When they get a reasonable distance from you and are running straight away, fire *between and over* their ears. You will get them every time, and you are not likely to riddle the body with shot. In the old days we always had a Jack rabbit shoot

Christmas Day and New Year's Day, usually ending up with a jamboree in the evening. Boys, those were the days for pure unadulterated fun—living was cheap, nearly everyone had a little spending money—good whiskey was about ninety cents a bottle. The beer was good and a reasonable price. There is no excuse for the present high prices. When you read that the Government makes from one to two million profit, there is something radically wrong.

Shooters keep your gun clean and above all, when out in the field, look through your gun at least every half hour to see there are no obstructions. Even a leaf in the barrel may cause it to burst. More particularly have great care to look in your gun when going through scrub. I remember a good many years ago, I was going out one morning to do chores, I saw a chicken on a straw stack. I raced back to the house for the gun, rammed a couple of shells into the breech and proceeded to stalk Mr. Chicken. I backed up in some scrub and crawled right on top of him as I thought, put up the gun ready to shoot, but the chicken was not there, and I would not have been here to write this—for some silly ass had got hold of my gun and stuffed both muzzles full of paper in order to keep the dust out. I did not notice this until I broke the gun to take out the shells. Something would have happened to me all right. Like the story of two Irishmen hiding behind a hedge to shoot a man that they had a spite against. After waiting nearly all night one of them remarked: "Mike, I am afraid something has happened to him." If your gun should get leaded wash out with hot water and soap, dry thoroughly and run about an ounce of quicksilver up and down the barrels—first plugging them, of course; this same ounce of quicksilver will last you for years. Of course, if the gun is very badly leaded nothing will remove it. When putting away get two rods about the size of the bore, cover with green baize or billiard cloth, smear with vaseline, and insert them in the barrel, taking care to have them protruding at least an inch from the muzzle. These will keep your gun in excellent shape, and no accident can happen. To clean the locks, firing pins and extractor use a feather dipped in good gun oil.

CHAPTER XIX

In the Spring you hear so often "Have you seen the geese?" instead of "It is a fine day!" Who the hell wants to see them, unless it be to say: "Good-bye and a pleasant journey to the North Pole," for you will not see them for another year. It is as much as your life is worth to be in the vicinity of them, for you are surrounded by rangers with field glasses and probably field guns; all for the protection of these birds for the shooters in Louisiana and Florida. The geese do not stay with us, do not breed here, and certainly do not come back this way in the Fall, and never will. Who started this anyway? Can't you see we are making ourselves the laughing stock of the southern states and depriving our good citizens of an occasional meal of a bird that we really have the most right to. I have shot many a goose in the early Spring, and I have never found

an egg in one. Not so the ducks, they are ready to lay their eggs just the minute they arrive, and if the geese were ready to hatch they certainly would (a lot of them) stay with us. I will bet you anything you like that you will not find a goose nest south of the 53rd Parallel. There is no use in saying anything about the methods of hunting them for you are not going to get very many. Geese are generally a very long shot except in windy and foggy weather, and I always carried a few "BB's" in my pocket, which I found mighty useful scores of times. They are even very good for a very long shot into a flock of mallards, out of range of the usual shell.

This going out to see the geese reminds me very much of a field trial. First of all you get a setter that can nearly catch a Jack. Speed is everything. The preliminaries are exactly the same as a couple of greyhounds running for "The Waterloo Cup." When you get to the hunting ground you release a couple and away they go "hell for leather," with no object in view. Presently one runs into a "Jack." This is the last you see of him for a week—generally turns up in Moose Jaw, or somewhere. The other dog runs his legs off and very often you will find him standing a gopher. This is a point, however, and the whole crowd rush forward to see him setting. Occasionally you will see a dog trying to rake a line of his own and really hunt; but this is not encouraged for he is put down as too slow. However, the little fellow without any encouragement from his trainer locates and stands his bird beautifully. There is a general call for the judge, but he and his lieutenant are half a mile away in a bluff having a couple of "quick ones," so this dog is overlooked. The best in the bunch! I have had some good working dogs in my day, but I am quite sure none of them would ever have won a field trial.

A young farmhand just out from the Old Country was sent out one evening to bring in the sheep. Just about dark he got them all in. The boss came out to look them over. The boy pointed out a little fellow and said: "I had more bother with that one than all the rest put together." "Why," the farmer said, "that is a Jack rabbit."

CHAPTER XX

Some years ago a shooting friend of mine took a trip to the Old Country. While there he advertised for a partner on his ranch. He got a reply from an old duffer in Ireland, which read as follows: "I had better tell you all about myself. I have never been ill in my life except I suffer from piles. I am sixty-six years of age. I look fifty, but if I was touched up a bit I would pass for thirty-five." He then went on to say that he had just buried his darling wife and was inconsolable. However, if my friend could pick him out a rich young girl willing to share the danger and hardships of Colonial life, he thought he would be willing to marry her. My friend answered back, to go and *duck* himself.

That is what the Empress Eugenie said to Napoleon when he asked her for the key to her bedroom door.

There is no special method of hunting bush partridges. Just go in the bush and make a noise like a nut. I had an old pointer who was too old for field work, but he sure was a humdinger for bush work. I would start him off in the wood and he would find these birds so quickly that they would not have time to fly, but would jump for a tree. Then the dog would sit under the tree and howl his head off until I came up to him. I usually used a Gem air-gun that I brought out from Ireland. It would kill them as dead as a door nail without bruising the flesh; and the slugs were only about fifty cents a thousand—mighty cheap shooting. When you can get these birds to fly they make a very sporting shot, especially in the woods; reminds you of shooting woodcock in cover in the Old Country.

I do not particularly care for the partridge as a table bird. They appeal to people more on account of their white flesh, but I have yet to find a partridge with a palatable flavor. I mean, of course, the bush partridge.

CHAPTER XXI

When you have mastered the art of tracking a jumping deer successfully, you have nothing more to learn. I have been tracking them for over forty years and I don't know half of it yet. You hear people say they are so tame and easy to get. You try and get a jumper after he has been hunted a couple of times. He will beat you every time. But one thing, as sure as fate, if you turn him he will invariably come back in his tracks to the place where you first started him, unless something crosses the line that he can wind or see. It would be best for one of you to stay right back and the other to follow him until he sees signs of the deer slowing up. At first Mr. Deer will run like hell between the bluffs—stand under cover and watch if you are still following him. His next move will be to spring to one side and go off at right angles to the trail; this is the time to watch the slot more carefully than ever, for after a bit he will *back track* and you will never notice it until you come to where his trail ends, as he will put his hoof down right over the old track, then he will spring to one side to the nearest scrub, and will lie down perhaps not ten yards from you, and you will have passed him in your tracking out. This time he will not let you pass him; but is up with a bound, and no matter how good you are with a rifle you will probably miss him. A shot gun with buckshot is the best weapon for the jumpers—in fact any deer. Do you know that eighty per cent of the deer shot are from twenty-five to one hundred yards from you, and not farther. Buckshot will kill anything at one hundred yards, and a deer is much easier to kill than a wolf, for the deer's hair is brittle and far apart. A wolf's coat is soft fur and likely to ball up in the bullet, which stops its striking power. After turning the deer and you have not run into him, the chances are your companion will get him, if he has had the patience to wait. But it takes some doing to stand still in the cold for perhaps three hours; and very few will do it.

But remember as sure as a gun if you don't stay the deer will pass right by where you were standing. But I would advise you to keep out of your companion's way who has, after a long arduous chase, driven the deer to you to find you gone. You will always find jumpers in the scrubby country where there is lots of pea-vine; and hardly ever in heavy timber, like the Jack rabbits. I hunted twenty-four years in the Riding Mountains and never saw a jumper. You will see them around the edges mostly, and generally not too far from water; which they not only use for drinking purposes, but as a matter of safety. How often you will see them make for a river when they are hunted, and when they are hunted by deer-hounds they will perhaps swim a mile up or down stream to destroy the scent. I have found them mighty cunning and it is just as much good luck as good management that I have been able to shoot as many as I have. It is very easy to tell a buck's slot from a doe's. A buck's is broad and long, not very pointed; a doe's narrow and pointed. But the best way to tell is to see a buck's and doe's slot together and you will never make a mistake again.

CHAPTER XXII

I would like to say a few words in connection with the present Game Laws. A few days ago a high-up official in the Parliament Buildings made a remark to me that I was rather hard on *our Government*. I am not hard on *our* Government, but I am certainly hard on legislation in regard to the Game Laws—for the past forty years be they Conservative, Liberals, Farmers, or anything else. We want an early season for ducks, chicken and more especially Hungarian partridge. No restrictions as to bag, and prolong the season until November first.

One party remarked to me that in these days of motor cars it encouraged slaughter. I hope it does, for we will have bigger and better coveys next year if more of the birds are shot. But you could not drive this into a layman's head with a sledge and hammer. In the year 1894, according to my game book, I helped to shoot 422 chicken, and at the end of that season the country was swarming with birds.

In 1895 our bag of chicken for the whole season was seventy birds. The answer to this from people who do not know anything about it was: "You shot too many birds the year before." Did you ever hear anything more nonsensical? The real cause was over-production, which means disease nearly decimated the birds. There was not a bird fit to eat. In all the game papers in the Old Country you are advised to shoot as many as you can in a season. If you do you will have bigger and better coveys next year. Remember that we have millions of acres of shooting land in the three provinces, and no motor cars or anything else will keep down the birds. Disease is the only thing that will lessen them. How is it in the Old Country, shooting over moors ten by twelve, you can shoot two or three hundred brace a day and next year have more birds than ever? Another argument put up is that the farmers shoot them all winter with

.22's. All they get with .22's will not amount to anything, and why should they not, they are food, and who is more entitled to the food than the farmers who raised them? I would say shoot them as long as they are fit for food, but not otherwise.

How many shooters make an awful mess of a wounded chicken when they try to kill it. Some will take the bird by the head and swing the neck off; nothing looks so unappetizing as a badly-mauled bird. Here is the way to do it: If a young bird, hold the bird in the left hand and press the end of the right-hand thumb into the skull of the bird. This will kill him cleanly. If he is an old bird a sledge hammer will not break his skull. In this case take the point of your knife and drive it into the skull. Another way to tell an old bird—look for the yellow rings around the eyes, when you see them, you can make up your mind that you have a mighty old stager. And in these days of curtailing the bag, you will find them in the majority. Some morning you will wake up to find all the birds gone owing to over-production.

CHAPTER XXIII

It is a long time since I have had a moose hunt, and I do not suppose I will ever have another. However, I like to think about it, and will endeavor to give you the benefit of my experience in the bush. First of all, and very important, is the dress. The usual is white with a peaked cap and ear lugs; so many hunters wear toques, but I always found I could see a thousand times better with the peak, and you sure want good eyesight in moose hunting; heavy underclothes, lots of woolen socks, moccasins with felt pads, a good sharp axe, and for a hunting knife a small butcher knife with a slightly curved blade. The so-called hunting knives sold in stores are useless—too short in the blade-handle, too short in the blade and blade nearly straight. What you want is a skinning knife—not a dagger. I remember the first year I went moose shooting—I had a dagger (My! but I was proud of it) but I soon found, in skinning a moose it was useless. You will probably be wearing a vest; fill every pocket with matches, and in addition get a waterproof match box to hold a few in case you stumble into a blind ditch, as I have done and got thoroughly wet in a strange country. A good compass will help a lot. And be sure and do what the compass tells you, for if you don't, look out, If you think you are lost you will begin to imagine the compass is wrong. This is the biggest mistake in the world. The compass is never wrong, if it is a good one. When you are taking your bearings it is better to lay your compass on a log, for sometimes when you are holding it in your hand some metallic substance such as your rifle or brass buttons may make the instrument wobble. Pack an emergency ration in an inner pocket so that it will not freeze, and your flask in your hip pocket, tightly buttoned up or you may lose it, as I did, and believe it or not before evening you will need a snort or two. In my opinion the most enjoyable drink of all time,

is when you have downed your moose, have cut his throat and are sitting on the carcass for a breather. Oh, Boy! If she doesn't gurgle down. You would not trade jobs with the King of England.

A good many years ago we had a parson in our little town. He was very fond of a little drop of "the stuff that killed Auntie." One very hot day in church, he started to mop his brow and gave out the hymn as "Pants my heart for cooling drinks."

Now you are all ready for the hunt. Do not start off like a bull moose tearing and ranting through the bush. Take it quietly. Don't talk, don't smoke. Chew if you want to. I always found a wad of gum the best. Watch your feet; many a moose has been lost by the breaking of a twig. When you find a fresh track, don't follow it—circle right or left—a half mile or so; for remember that a moose nearly always walks straight, not many turns. When you have circled a few times and cannot see any tracks, you can make up your mind Mr. Moose is between where you started to circle and where you are now standing. Cock your rifle and move quietly forward, taking care to tread on even ground. You will probably come on the moose lying down. I have walked within ten feet of them. Now the rest is up to you. Take a dangerous tight hold of yourself, for if you miss him now you will never see that moose again. I have seen and heard so much about buck fever, and would not have believed it possible if I had not seen an elk run within ten yards of a hunter, and he was so completely paralyzed he could not put up his gun. I never had it myself, and have had the luck to kill a deer whenever I got a fairly decent shot at him. Never leave a deer dead in the bush without sticking. They will bloat very quickly—inside of two hours—and I am quite sure it spoils the flavor of the meat.

When the wind is crashing through the trees it is fairly easy to get a shot, but it takes some hunter to get his game on a still day and the crust is on the snow. On such a day I would advise you to stay in camp, cut up your wood, etc.

CHAPTER XXIV

A great help to me in the old days was my shooting pony, Jim—known all over western Manitoba as "Jim Daly." He was a lazy old son-of-a-gun starting out; but oh, Boy! you should see him coming home late at night and perhaps fifteen miles to go. The way he would burn those miles was a caution—sixty miles a day was nothing to him so long as he could get a drink. Every stream or puddle he came to, down would go his head for a couple of "quick ones." Some unkind person said he was very like his master. God rest his soul—he lived to thirty-two years of age, and no finer or more clever horse breathed the breath of life. He would smell a chicken anywhere, and when he started to shake his head it was time to get out of the buggy. For as sure as fate there would be a chicken there. You could leave him standing on the prairie for hours and never a move out of him. I would just take off the bridle, throw him a couple of sheaves of oats. As a young horse he was steel grey, but as

the years rolled on he turned pure white. I used to take him up to the bush, moose shooting, as one of the team. His mate, a bay, we tethered with a white blanket. But Mr. Jim roamed the bush all day and all night. But he would not go very far from camp or from his mate. At dusk he would come to the tent door and try and pull the flap open. This was a hint for his supper. There was no moose or elk could come with a quarter-mile of the camp but he would wind them. I will never forget one night we were just getting off to sleep and Jim started to whinny by way of calling us. My friend said, "I will bet there is a moose mighty near camp—listen to Jim." In the early morning I walked down to the water-hole to fill our kettle, and within fifty yards of the tent three big moose had passed in the night.

On another occasion we were lying fast asleep in the tent. We had a sack of oats for a pillow. Presently there was a tremendous yank, and the sack of oats disappeared from under our heads. I felt sure it was a bear and jumped up, lit the lantern, and looked around. No sign of the sack, but I heard some crunching outside the tent—slipped on my shoes, opened the tent door very quietly and peeped around the corner. Here was Jim trying to get the sack open. He had smelled the oats and burrowed underneath the tent.

CHAPTER XXV

It is a strange thing what has become of the upland plover. They did not disappear gradually, but mighty suddenly. A few years ago there were millions of them, and now it is hard to find a single bird. Although they were delicious eating, no one bothered to shoot them, at least not in Western Canada. It must be another case of over-production.

This itself should be sufficient warning to the makers of the Game Laws; but anything I say, or anyone else, will not make them see the harm done in restricting the shooting as much as they are doing. They will find out one of these days when it is too late—like their drainage system.

I have no fault with the *administration* of the Game Laws, for I think they are in very capable hands in our worthy friend — Mr. Cunningham—who thoroughly understands his business and is more familiar with the great out-of-doors than most men. But I certainly have a lot of fault to find with the *makers* of the Game Laws for this reason: They have not had sufficient actual experience in the field to enable them to frame our Game Laws. I find that not one in ten has ever read any of the numerous books on shooting edited by the best authorities in the world, which can be gotten at very little cost in England. The Badminton Library books on shooting consists of two volumes—namely, "Moor and Marsh" and "Field and Covert." They comprise every branch of shooting and beautifully illustrated hints to beginners. And believe me when a man has read these books he will begin to think that he really knows nothing about shooting. And when a man realizes this, he will begin to learn and perhaps will be able to see things as they are, and as they should be, before daring to dictate to the people of the province as to when and how they should shoot feathered game.

CHAPTER XXVI

A well-known sportsman of this city was kind enough to say: "All members of the Grain Exchange enjoyed your book 'Shooting Reminiscences' very much; but what we really want is a book on Methods of Approaching Game, Weather Conditions, etc." And he went on to say: "The majority of us are shooters and that is as far as it goes. We go out to the marsh, sit in our punts and shoot a duck, and we drive along the road, shoot a chicken, if we see it; but there are very few of us, if put in a tight corner would come home with very many birds, for we do not know how to hunt." What an admission to make! Shows you what a hell of a good chap he was. And I know for a fact that he knows a great deal more about shooting than nine out of ten so-called experts.

Here is something which I trust my readers will take to heart from the "Shooting Times and British Sportsman," November 18th, 1933:

"The proceedings on the grouse moors at present is the killing down of as many of the old cocks as possible, and in a year when grouse were more plentiful than for five years at least, it is wonderful how many of these old warriors have escaped with their lives. They are able to protect themselves by rising far out, and we believe in it being put on the Statute book that old cock grouse can be shot by the gamekeepers *on the spot all Winter and Spring*, and it would do great good to the moors. These old devils in feathers do a lot of harm during nesting time. They have passed the utility stage themselves and have no personal interest in nesting operations beyond disputing the rights of the young birds to the sponsorship of the hens."

"Every Spring in passing through the grouse moors we see these old gladiators fighting, and always we wish we had permission to shoot some of them."

It is so big a matter, and it means so much to future shooting. And even in these times it cannot be called a frivolous matter to get it corrected.

I, myself, noticed that the old stagers with yellow around the eyes, and skulls unbreakable, to be in the majority during the past season. Probably all the young birds were shot off long before the season opened. The increasing restrictions as to bag limit and length of season are too drastic and have created a great deal of resentment among shooters, and no one has any respect for the law under present conditions, and try to enforce them. It would take a regiment of soldiers to enforce the present law; and you cannot enforce the law that people do not believe in. What we want is fair and expert legislation; and the co-operation of hunters will soon follow.

CHAPTER XXVII

A friend took exception to my remarks re Spring shooting of geese, he stating the geese were not as plentiful as they used to be years ago.

Now there have been no geese of any amount shot in the last twenty years in our province. So you can't blame the gunners. The geese are not scarce, and if it were the old days of sowing broadcast instead of drilled in, you would see the prairies covered with them, especially waveys.

Another remark made—which needs some explaining—was that it is not necessary to have barley fields, etc., for duck feed, as thousands of them were to be found in the rock country in Central Manitoba gold fields. Let me tell you they get the finest feed in the world there—"wild rice" in abundance. This feed ducks prefer to any other.

Partridges and tarred roads: A word of warning is sounded in the Old Country to the effect if roads are tarred it is going to take a tremendous toll on the birds, as partridges like to frequent roads for gravel and dust. They get the tar on their wings and feathers, which acts like "bird lime" and greatly hampers them in their search for food. Thousands of the birds have been destroyed by these tarred roads.

Shooters beware, and give a wide berth to the indiscriminate shot firing shells in the direction of game. Time and again in a stubble shoot or evening flight I have been lying hidden, waiting for the ducks to come in, presently you spot a flock making directly for your decoys. All of a sudden you hear probably five shots from a pump at your birds, which are at least two hundred yards in the air. Your shooting for the evening is done. For goodness's sake leave the high ones alone, and as the Frenchman said: "———Let them sit!"

In conclusion I would like to say that in the last few months I have had the privilege of talking to some of the best authorities on Game Shooting and Game Preservation in the province. And if we had a few more men such as these to frame our Game Laws I feel quite satisfied that every hunter would respect their decision and there would be less poaching. First of all there is that capable and untiring worker for the cause—Dr. Weagant, surgeon-dentist, in the Somerset Block; Mr. D. Bain; Mr. Brodie, Sr., in the Grain Exchange; Mr. Sutherland of the Sovereign Life; and Detective-Sergeant James Craig, of the City Police Force; all of Winnipeg, in Manitoba.

I do hope that my book will be of some benefit to, at least, the younger generation; and should any of my readers take exception to any of my field notes, I would be only too glad to discuss the matter personally with them.

It is now Christmas week and to all my kind readers would like to say that I hope we all will be spared to have many joyous shoots; and in the words of that witty Irishman, the late Dean O'Meara:

*"Hark the Herald Agents sing,
Beecham's Pills are just the thing,
Peace on earth and mercy mild—
Two for an Adult and one for a Child."*